

No. 33 - Southern Sierra Integrated Regional Water Management Region

Region Acceptance Process Summary

General Description of Region

The Southern Sierra Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Region is located in the Tulare Lake Hydrologic Region. The Sierra Crest represents this Region's east boundary, and the 600-foot topographic contour line as its west boundary. This Region covers the upper watersheds of the San Joaquin, Kings, Kaweah, Tule, Poso Creek, Kern, and other smaller rivers. Over 80 percent of the surface water is diverted outside of the Southern Sierra IRWM Region. There are inconsistencies between the RAP stated and mapped Southern Sierra IRWM Region boundary. As a result, the Southern Sierra IRWM Region provided revised boundaries that do not overlap with the Kern County IRWM Region. This Region will use the San Joaquin River as the boundary that splits the upper San Joaquin River watershed in two, to solve the overlap problem with the Madera County and Central California IRWM Regions.

The Southern Sierra Planning Committee (equivalent to Regional Water Management Groups in other Regions) consists of fourteen members with fifteen participants, and another 35 interested parties on their mailing list. The Region consists of many small rural foothill and mountain communities, native Indian tribes, and Disadvantaged Communities. The Southern Sierra IRWM Planning Committee concerns are environmental protection and restoration; erosion control within the entire region, particularly in the forest fire burned areas; water quality and water supply protection and improvement; and upgrading aging infrastructures in the Region.

Interview Conclusions- Conditional Approval for Planning Funds Only

For future region approval consideration, DWR requires that the Southern Sierra IRWM Region:

1. Coordinate and cooperate with the Kern County IRWM Region, to ensure optimal planning efforts in the mountains and foothill areas and other adjacent IRWM Regions. The two regions have resolved their overlap issue.
2. Develop an effective mechanism for cooperation and coordination with the Madera and Central California IRWM Regions to ensure that IRWM planning for the San Joaquin River watershed is not fractured; and
3. Provide documentation to DWR indicating the north boundary solution with the Madera County.

DWR will allow this Region to apply for only planning grant funds. This region is not yet qualified to apply for implementation grant funds.